IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE, ANDHRA PRADESH
AT HYDERABAD

(Special Original Jurisdiction)

THURSDAY, THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF JUNE
TWO THOUSAND AND FIVE

PRESENT

THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE V.V.S.RAO

WRIT PETITION NO : 17277 of 2001

Between:

1. Sri Venkateswara Talkies,
   Mummidivaram, East Godavari District.

Rep. by its Managing Partner Kumaraswamy Raju,

S/o. Venkateswara Raju
2 Chandrika Theatre,
Kakinada, East Godavari District,

Rep. By its Managing Partner K.Ch. Ramana Rao,

S/o. Satyanarayana,

3. Sri Satya Touring Talkies,
   Neelapalli, Tallarevu Mandal, East Godavari District,

Rep. By its Managing Partner V. Kodandarayudu, s/o. Late Ramaiah,
4. Venkateswara Talkies, Visakhapatnam.
Rep. By its Managing Partner J.N. Choudary,

S/o. Late Mallikarjunudu,

5. M/s. Lakshmikanta A/C. Theatre, Gazuwaka,

Visakhapatnam District,
Rep.by its Managing Partner,
G.S. Ramachandra Rao
6. Lakshmi A/c. Theatre, Gazuwaka,
Visakhapatnam Dist., Rep.by Managing Partner,
G.S. Ramachandra Rao

..... PETITIONERS

AND

1 Andhra Pradesh Wakf Board, Rep.by its Chief Executive Director,
Exhibition Grounds, Hyderabad.
2 Government of Andhra Pradesh,

Home (General Administration) Department,
Secretariat, Hyderabad, Rep.by its Secretary.
3 Joint Collector, East Godavari Dist., Kakinada.
4 Joint Collector, Visakhapatnam Dist., Visakhapatnam.

.....RESPONDENTS

Petition under Article 226 of the constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the Affidavit filed herein the High Court may be pleased to issue writ of Mandamus, or any other appropriate writ or direction declaring the action of the respondents in the G.O.Ms.No.538, dt.11-7-1994 and G.O.Ms.No.218, Home (General-A) Department dt.14-7-1995 in so far as fixing the maximum rate of admission to the lowest class beyond the scope of the provisions of the act as illegal, arbitrary.

Counsel for the Petitioners:MR.N.PRAVEEN KUMAR

Counsel for the Respondent Nos.1 to 4: GP FOR HOME

The Court made the following :

ORDER:

The petitioners are cinema theatres having B-form licences under A.P.Cinemas (Regulation) Act, 1955. The Writ Petition is filed questioning G.O.Ms.No.538 Home (Genl.A) Department, dt.11.7.1994 and G.O.Ms.No.218 Home (Genl.A) Department, dt.14.7.1995.

The question raised in this Writ Petition is squarely covered by my judgment in **Natraj Theatre v. Government of Andhra Pradesh**, which was subsequently followed by other Judges of this Court. In the said judgment this Court issued the following directions.

1. The impugned Memo No.1730/Genl.A1/94-3 dated 23.5.1995 is declared as *ultra vires*, without power or jurisdiction and the same is set aside.

2. Consequential orders passed by the Licensing Authority, if any, are vitiated as the Licensing Authority abdicated its statutory functions and acted as per the dictates of the Government, and they accordingly are set aside.

3. If the petitioner has already been accorded permission for reducing seating capacity either by the Government or by the Licensing Authority, the same shall not be rescinded. However, if the order is passed by the Government pursuant to the interim orders of this Court, a formal order by the Licensing Authority is a must to save the order of the Government from the vice of being void order.

4. The petitioner is permitted to make application to the Licensing Authority seeking reduction of seating capacity, if not already made before or during the pendency of the writ petition. Such application shall be considered in accordance with law and keeping in view the observations in this judgment. For the purpose of direction No.3 above the application made by the petitioner, if any, shall be considered.

5. If any licensee has reduced seating capacity in anticipation of sanction by the Licensing Authority, the Licensing Authority may inspect the theatre and give further directions as may be appropriate to avoid abuse or misuse of reduced seating capacity. This direction is in accordance with the judgment of the Division Bench of this Court in W.P.No.9640 of 1984 dated 30.10.1984.

6. The licensee shall not be entitled to enhance the rates of admission which has been already sanctioned by the Government vide G.O.Ms.No.218 dated 14.7.1995 and any further enhancement by the licensee will be in accordance with further sanction by the competent authority. And

7. It is further directed that the Licensing Authority has to consider any application filed at any time seeking reduction of seating capacity subject to the provisions of the Rule 10-A without any restriction as to cut off date.

Following the same, this Writ Petition is also disposed of in terms of above directions. There shall be no order as to costs.

_____

(V.V.S.RAO, J)

16.6.2005

bnr/ys

To

1 The Chief Executive Director, Andhra Pradesh Wakf Board,
Exhibition Grounds, Hyderabad.
2 The Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh,

Home (General Administration) Department,
Secretariat, Hyderabad.
3 The Joint Collector, East Godavari Dist., Kakinada.
4 The Joint Collector, Visakhapatnam Dist., Visakhapatnam.

5 2 CCs to G.P. for Home, High Court Bldgs., Hyderabad (OUT)

6 2 CD copies.